



**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION  
AND RESPONSE**

# **DEVELOPING AND SUSTAINING A Sexual Assault Response Team [SART]**

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# AGENDA

- Why is a team needed?
- Who is on the team?
- Goals of a SART
- Current responses to sexual assault cases
- Collaboration
- Victim advocates
- Challenges
- Differing advocacy
- Overcoming barriers
- Training wrap-up: Next steps



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# WHY A TEAM?

- WHO is on the TEAM?
- What are we supposed to do?
- Who decides all this?



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# WHY A TEAM?

The multi-disciplinary case management group shall be convened by the SARC,...on a monthly basis to review individual cases, facilitate monthly victim updates and ensure system coordination, accountability, and victim access to quality services...*DoDI 6495.02, E7.1.1*

- An installation/unit where professionals don't talk to one another is in trouble.
- Group decision making invests people in the success of the project at hand.



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# **WHO IS ON THIS TEAM?**

- Commander
- Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC)
- Victim Advocate (VA/UVA)
- MCIOs/Law Enforcement (LE)
- Command Legal Representative
  - Victim Witness Assistance Personnel (VWAP)
- Chaplain
- Healthcare personnel



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## **GOALS OF A SART**

- To afford victims prompt access to comprehensive immediate care
- Minimize trauma
- Access to installation/local civilian resources
- Facilitate the collection and documentation of evidence as well as all the actions required for a timely and thorough investigation in a way that is respectful to victims





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## **OTHER SART ACTIVITIES**

- Ongoing (monthly?) case management and review
- Development of protocols and MOU's
- Multi-disciplinary training
- Systems review to improve the overall SART performance
- Collecting information and surveys on victim satisfaction
- Coordinating publicity and public awareness
- Defining and evaluating success of the SART



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# **ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION OF CURRENT RESPONSES TO SEXUAL ASSAULT CASES**





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# **HYPOTHETICAL SEXUAL ASSAULT CASE**

TODAY, how would typical sexual assault –related personnel respond to this victim?

- Commander
- SARC
- VA/UVA
- MCIOs/LE
- Command Legal Representative
- Chaplain
- Healthcare personnel



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# **UNDERSTANDING COLLABORATION**



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# **WHAT IS COLLABORATION?**

- Collaboration is frequently misunderstood.
- Everyone thinks they're doing it!
- This is because the term “collaboration” is mistakenly used to describe individual and office relationships at varying stages of development.



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# COLLABORATION

Offices and individuals actually engage in four very different levels of joint activity.

- Networking
- Coordinating
- Cooperating
- Collaborating

*A bit more on each of these...*

*Himmelman, A., Collaboration For a Change: Definitions, Models, Roles, and a Guide to Collaborative Processes. 1994*



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# **NETWORKING**

The simplest form of joint activity – the exchange of information for mutual benefit.

# **COORDINATING**

Refers to the exchange of information and the altering of activities for mutual benefit.



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## **COOPERATING**

Reaches beyond these concepts, bringing with it a much higher level of commitment and responsibility.

## **COLLABORATING**

Expands the definition of “coordinating” to include not only the exchange of information, but also the sharing of resources for mutual benefit.





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# **COLLABORATION IS BEST DEFINED AS...**

“A process through which parties can see different aspects of a problem, can constructively explore their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their own limited version of what is possible.”

*Gray, B., Collaborating: Finding Common Ground for Multi-Party Problems. 1989: Jossey Bass.*



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# **COLLABORATION**

- Therefore, in addition to exchanging information, altering activities, and sharing resources, collaboration enhances the capacity of another for mutual benefit and to achieve a common purpose.
- Groups that achieve this are truly collaborating.



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# **COLLABORATION**

**For collaborative teams to be effective, they must:**

- Have diverse membership by representing all the stakeholders who can impact, or are impacted, by the issue.



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# **COLLABORATION**

- **Have a “Champion,”** an individual of significant stature and/or authority to bring others to the table and keep them there; someone who has an understanding of the problem or issue and can envision an effective solution.
- Have sufficient staffing support
- By group members or others outside of the group to carry out the work



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# **TRAITS OF COLLABORATING TEAMS**

- A clear and elevating goal
- Principled leadership
- A results driven structure
- Competent team members
- A unified commitment
- Standards of excellence/care
- A collaborative climate
- External support and recognition

*Team Work, Larson, Carl E., and LaFasato, M.J., Sage Series, 1989*



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# **DEVELOP A COLLECTIVE MISSION**

To work together across disciplinary boundaries, in order to coordinate and improve the military response to sexual assault.





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# **COLLABORATIVE OUTCOMES**

- Increased knowledge and understanding, leading to better decisions and greater political support
- Resource sharing rather than competition for resources
- Effective system change



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# KEY POINTS

- The collaborative process demands constant attention and nurturing.
  - Without this, these processes often fail.
- Collaboration is time and resource intensive.
  - Should be viewed as an important investment in issues that concern a cross-section of interest and require broad support for successful implementation.
- It is essential to include the right people/ offices/interests in the collaborative process.
- For the collaborative approach to succeed, adequate supports must be in place



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# SART VICTIM ADVOCATES

Provide

- Accompaniment
  - Hospital
  - Court
- Crisis Intervention
- Follow-up Services
  - Medical
  - Counseling appointments
- Advocacy
- Resources/Information





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# **SART VICTIM ADVOCATES**

- Acts as liaison for victim/survivor
- Facilitates access to ongoing services
- Empowers victims/survivors to make informed choices
- Remain victim-centered at all times





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# **ADVOCATES ARE NOT ALL THE SAME**

## **Military Advocates**

- SARCs
- VAs
- VWAP

## **Local Civilian Advocates**

- Rape Crisis Advocate
- Hospital Advocate
- Community Group Advocates
- Legal Advocate/Lawyer





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# COLLABORATION

With the survivor's permission,  
advocates will work with:

- SARC
- Unit leaders
- Healthcare personnel
- MCIOs/LE
- Victim/Witness
- Family, friends







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# ***CHALLENGES:***

## **DIFFERENT AGENDAS**

- Advocates
  - Victim is a “survivor”
  - Believes and supports the “survivor” whether she/he chooses an Unrestricted or Restricted report
- Cdrs/JAGs/MCIOs/LE
  - Does the case meet issuing guidelines?
  - Can a court-martial panel be convinced?
  - Sexual assault cases are unpopular



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# **DIFFERING ADVOCACY: INSTALLATION vs. SYSTEMS**

- Installation Based
- Independent of Criminal Justice System
- Confidentiality
- On-Going Support Regardless of Participation in Prosecution
- JAG/MCIO/Law Enforcement Based
- Criminal Justice System Oriented
- No Confidentiality (generally)
- Supports/Facilitates Participation in Prosecution



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# MULTI-DISCIPLINARY RESPONSES

Successful investigation of a sexual assault requires multiple officers, outside resources, and clear communication with every member of the team.





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# **BARRIERS TO VICTIM SERVICE COLLABORATION**



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# **BARRIERS TO VICTIM SERVICES COLLABORATION**

- Theory versus application

EXAMPLE: In an effort to decrease potential trauma to victims, officers have been directed not to interview victims and to immediately transport survivors to hospitals

- Reality

MCIOs/LE has to determine what crime(s) occurred; identify and interview witnesses; detain and arrest suspect(s), secure crime scene and gather evidence, etc.





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# BARRIERS TO VICTIM SERVICES COLLABORATION

- Competition for scarce resources
- Differences in professional mission
  - SARC: “The Defense counsel wants me to turn over all of my case files.”
- Perceptions that advocates are “out to get” other professionals
- Lack of appreciation or understanding of MCIO/law enforcement role





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## **BARRIERS TO VICTIM SERVICES COLLABORATION**

- Prior conflict
- Anticipation of future conflict
- Lack of feedback on case outcomes
- Frustration with low prosecution rates
- Misperception of false reports



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# **OVERCOMING BARRIERS**

- Systems need to be designed so that SARCs/advocates can respond to the field
- Collaborators need to understand the role and responsibilities of MCIOs/law enforcement
- Standards of care and protocols have to be realistic or redesigned
- Each installation is different depending on resources available



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# UNDERSTANDING ROLES AND BOUNDARIES

- MCIOs
  - Fact finder
  - Investigates the case
  - Determines what happened based on evidence & statements
  - Submits case to Command
    - Impact on good order and discipline
    - If elements are met
    - If the victim is able to participate
- Advocate
  - Provides emotional support for the victim, which allows the investigator to concentrate on the case
  - Liaison for resources
  - Accompaniment



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# **OVERCOMING BARRIERS**

- MCIOs may believe the advocate is there to catch them doing something wrong
- Advocates need to understand that most investigators want to do the right thing
- MCIOs/LE needs to understand that the role of the advocate is to provide unconditional support
- Collaborators need to develop protocols in advance
- We're not always going to agree
- Use positive messages to teach



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# **OVERCOMING BARRIERS**

- Basic operating principles for SART members
  - What is best for the victim and in the best interest of the command?
  - A commitment to the SART approach
  - Understanding that mistakes and conflicts are expected
  - Understand that problems/conflict are opportunities for improvement





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# **OVERCOMING BARRIERS**

- Protocols and constructive methods for resolving mistakes and disagreement will be developed in response to problems
- Problems will be addressed and not be allowed to continue unresolved
- Always take a constructive approach, no matter how difficult the problem
- Understand the difference between immediate resolution and long term



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# **OVERCOMING BARRIERS**

Making a Difference:  
Collaborative Teamwork

**SARTs work collaboratively to ensure provision  
of quality victim/survivor sensitive services**

**=**

**SUCCESS**



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# **TRAINING WRAP-UP: “NEXT STEPS”**



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# **“NEXT STEPS” FOR DEVELOPING A SART**

- Identify and invite participation of relevant individuals;
- Conduct monthly SARBs;
- Spend some time educating each other about roles and divergent goals;
- Secure training in SART and/or facilitation if necessary
- Set some ground rules and stick to them.



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# **“NEXT STEPS:” PREPARING PROTOCOLS FOR COLLABORATION**

- Identify topics to be addressed.
- Give assignments.
- Encourage discussion.
- Stay within the parameters of your purpose.
- Avoid unrelenting revisions to written documents that will need to evolve over time.





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# **“NEXT STEPS:” PROTOCOL IMPLEMENTATION**

- Who needs to bless this protocol to make it official? i.e. the Commander
- How do you distribute and to whom?
- Training is critical!
- Encourage feedback
- Bring the team together and review the success of the protocol
- What needs to be changed?



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# **Questions?**

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